

breeds numerously." In Mr. Gould's folio, too, no more detailed account is given, with the exception of the record of Sclater's unsuccessful expedition ten years ago. Now our experiences as to the position of the Spoonbill's nest certainly agree with the details given by Messrs. Dickson and Ross, who met with it breeding near Erzeroum (P. Z. S. 1839, p. 134); and this seems to have been the fullest account known to Mr. Dresser at the time of writing his article. So, although there seems to be no reasonable doubt that in some cases it nests in lofty trees, we may claim to have established the fact that in Holland it breeds on the ground among the reed-beds, and to be able to assure those naturalists who happen to be in Amsterdam at the right time that there is no better way of spending a spare day than an excursion to the Spoonbills' nesting-place on the Horster Meer.

We cannot conclude this short account of a most delightful day without thanking Mr. Hegt most heartily for his kind arrangements for our trip, without which we should probably have encountered considerable difficulty in reaching our destination. It is to be feared that in England we could hardly promise to show our friends an equally interesting sight in such close proximity to our metropolis!

XXXVI.—*Remarks on the Buceros bicornis of Linnæus.*

By D. G. ELLIOT, F.R.S.E. &c.

IN 'Stray Feathers' for 1876, p. 385, Mr. Hume expresses the opinion that the name of *Buceros bicornis*, bestowed by Linnæus upon a species of Hornbill, belongs properly to the *B. convexus*, Temminck, described in the 'Planches Coloriées,' and figured on plate no. 530. In order to test the correctness of this view, it will be advantageous to ascertain, as far as may be possible, the material at Linnæus's command when he established the name of *bicornis*; and to accomplish this satisfactorily it will be necessary to examine the older authors cited by him, and whom, it is very evident, he mainly followed. Willughby is among the first of those quoted by Linnæus; and

on turning to plate 17. fig. 1 of the 'Ornithology,' we find a very recognizable representation of the head and bill of the Homrai, or "Great Hornbill," as it is called by Jerdon, with its broad flat casque, having the anterior margin curved upwards, and terminating on both sides in miniature "horns." There can be no doubt whatever as to the species this figure is intended to represent. Brisson is another of the more important of the authors referred to, who preceded the twelfth edition of Linnæus's great work (1766), which is the one now quoted. We here find, as stated by Mr. Hume, some considerable confusion existing between the description of the head and casque and that of the body and tail. Brisson, however, expressly states that he had only seen the *head and bill* of the species called by him *Hydrocorax philippensis*; and his description of this portion of the bird, which was at that time in the collection of M. de Réaumur, evidently proved that it was of the same species as the one figured by Willughby in his 'Ornithology.' Brisson does not state where he got the idea of the colour of the plumage of the body and tail; but as he had never seen the bird itself, he must either have copied it from some other description, and unfortunately hit upon the wrong bird, or else have drawn upon his imagination, from which source, however, it must in justice be said, Brisson seldom derived any assistance. The tail of the bird, stated to be composed of twelve feathers, ten black and two white, is very properly characterized by Mr. Hume as one "which no Hornbill in the world has," so far as we know at present, and could not have been described from any specimen. But the parts which Brisson did see, the casque and bill, are accurately described; and it is on this description and on Willughby's figure that Linnæus based the name of *Buceros bicornis*, to which the diagnosis, "*B. fronte ossea, plana, antrorsum bicorni*," applies. In his description of the plumage Linnæus is as wide of the mark as was Brisson; and he, too, evidently had no specimen of the bird before him, but in a great degree copied Brisson's imaginary description. As, therefore, it is perfectly well established that the portions known to have been in the possession of the authors men-

tioned belonged to the Homrai, or Great Hornbill, with the flat casque, curved upwards anteriorly, that bird should stand as the *B. bicornis*, Linn., of which name *B. cavatus*, Shaw, is a synonym. The descriptions given by Brisson and Linnæus of the plumage of the *body*, not answering to any known species, cannot receive any consideration in connexion with *B. bicornis*. That of Linnæus applies best to *Buceros* (*Anthracoceros*) *malabaricus* of Gmelin; but the description of the casque shows that this species was not intended.

XXXVII.—*Notes on a 'Catalogue of the Accipitres in the British Museum,' by R. Bowdler Sharpe (1874). By J. H. GURNEY.*

[Continued from p. 333.]

IN my last paper I alluded (*anteà*, p. 332) to the occurrence of *Aquila clanga* in Spain. Since then the Norwich Museum has been enriched by the gift, from Lieut.-Col. L. H. Irby, of an adult male of that species, killed near Seville on the 11th February last, which I take this opportunity of recording*.

The typical Eagles (those of the genera *Uroaëtus* and *Aquila*) to which I am disposed to limit the term "Aquilinæ," pass by an almost imperceptible gradation into the next group, the Hawk-Eagles, for which the designation of "Thrasaëtinaë," suggested by the late Mr. Blyth†, may, I think, be conveniently adopted.

The Hawk-Eagles are all, more or less, distinguished from the typical Aquilinæ, as above restricted, by one or more of the following peculiarities, all of which seem to me to be indicative of Asturine affinities, viz. wings proportionally shorter, tail relatively longer, very large and generally much

* Col. Irby informs me that another Seville specimen of *A. clanga*, a nearly adult bird, is in the collection of Lord Lilford.

† *Vide* 'Catalogue of the Birds in the Museum of the Asiatic Society,' p. 24.